

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claims 1-4 are currently being prosecuted. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the Amendments and Remarks as set forth hereinbelow.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner considers the subject matter of claims 1-4 as being allowable if amended to comply with 35 USC 112. Although not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, claims 1-4 have been amended to comply with 35 USC 112. Claims 1-4 are now in condition for allowance.

CLAIM FOR PRIORITY

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner has recognized the claim for foreign priority. In view of the fact that the claim for foreign priority has been perfected, no additional action is required at this time.

DRAWINGS

It is gratefully acknowledged that the Examiner has approved the Formal Drawings. The drawings comply with the requirements of the USPTO. No further action is necessary.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

The Examiner has acknowledged the Information Disclosure Statements filed on July 13, 2005, April 14, 2006 and April 28, 2006. Initialed copies of the PTO/SB/08A have been received from the Examiner. With regard to the IDS filed on July 18, 2005, the Examiner has acknowledged all of the cited documents except for JP 6-84486-A. Applicants are reviewing the number provided with regard to this particular JP patent. No further action is necessary at this time.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 112

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 USC 112 as being indefinite. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, the claims have been amended to change "a tab-like stopper" to -- a tab stopper --. This change is supported by the illustrations set forth in Figs. 3B and 4B. In addition, "strip-like band" has been changed to -- strip band --. Although this correction was not suggested by the Examiner, the change to strip band is consistent with the suggestions as set forth on the bottom of page 2 of the Office Action. Claims 1-4 are now in condition for allowance.

REJECTION UNDER 35 USC 103

Claims 5-7 stand rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Chi, US 6,131,245 in view of Oetiker, US 4,103,399. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Although not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, claims 5-7 have been cancelled. The Examiner's rejection has been obviated.

NO PROSECUTION HISTORY ESTOPPEL

Claims 1-4 have been amended to clarify the claim language. No prosecution history estoppel would apply to the interpretation of the limitations set forth in claims 1-4 in view of the fact that this subject matter has been continuously presented since the original filing date of the present application.

REQUEST FOR INTERVIEW

If the Examiner has any questions with regard to this application please contact the undersigned so that an interview can be arranged in connection with this application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the above remarks, it is believed that the claims clearly distinguish over the patents relied on by the Examiner, either alone or in combination.

Since the remaining patents cited by the Examiner have not been utilized to reject the claims, but to merely show the state of the art, no comment need be made with respect thereto.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims are respectfully requested.

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. A full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action. The present application is now in condition for allowance.

A prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact James M. Slattery, Registration No. 28,380, at the telephone number of the undersigned below to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Director is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge any fees required during the pendency of the above-identified application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448.

Dated: March 28, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

By 

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Attachments: Marked-up copy and Clean copy of the Specification